



# **MAILMAN RELEASE NOTES**

**Version 7.1 & Patch XM\*7.1\*50**

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Department of Veterans Affairs  
VISTA Software Development  
Infrastructure Product Line



# MailMan Patch XM\*7.1\*50 (Patch 50) Release Notes



*"MailMan Patch 50, it'll change your life!"*

This document provides a brief background of MailMan V. 7.1 and Patch 50 (i.e., XM\*7.1\*50). It also highlights the new options and functionality introduced with Patch 50.

The topics covered in this document include:

- **Why was MailMan Patch 50 Created?**
- **What are the New Features and Improvements?**





## Why was MailMan Patch 50 Created?

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MailMan, part of the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (**VISTA**), is over 15 years old. It was one of the first **VISTA** packages implemented at field facilities. The code was compactly written, and variable names were kept to very few characters. However, over the years, as it grew and gained capabilities, MailMan has been continually patched, making it very difficult to maintain. Also, with the advent of the 1990 M Standard, M became a more powerful, more elegant language, yet MailMan did not take advantage of these changes. In addition, MailMan did not fully use VA FileMan's functionality. However, with the release of MailMan Patch 50 (i.e., XM\*7.1\*50), this, and more, has all been changed.

MailMan Patch 50 now takes full advantage of the 1990 M Standard as well as using VA FileMan's functionality to help standardize MailMan within **VISTA**. Though this patch was created primarily to standardize MailMan and make it easier to maintain, extensive improvements and new features have also been included. These new improvements and features provide all MailMan users with a wealth of new functionality. MailMan now has a new user interface!

Patch XM\*7.1\*50 is a large MailMan patch. In addition to the above mentioned changes, this patch does the following:

- Addresses over 55 reported bugs (National Online Information Sharing system [NOIS])
- Includes over 45 enhancement requests and suggestions (Electronic Error and Enhancement Requests [E3Rs])
- Provides background changes to MailMan APIs
- Provides *New* APIs for programmers of **VISTA** software
- Includes an updated user guide and online help frames





## What are the New Features and Improvements?

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Patch 50 provides MailMan with a new user interface. This new interface gives you the power to further customize your message center and better manage your e-mail.

The MailMan interface with Patch 50 now has the following new look:

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VA MailMan 7.1 service for BLUE.THOMAS_E+@ISC-SF.VA.GOV
You last used MailMan: 09 Jul 98 09:41
Your current banner: Thom Blue, MailMan Tester, CIO Field Office San Francisco
You have no new messages.

NML    New Messages and Responses
RML    Read/Manage Messages
SML    Send a Message
        Query/Search for Messages
AML    Become a Surrogate (SHARED,MAIL or Other)
        Personal Preferences ...
        Other MailMan Functions ...
        Help (User/Group Info., etc.) ...

Select MailMan Menu Option:

```

**Figure 1: The New MailMan Patch 50 Interface**

The following list highlights the **New** and **Improved** features with MailMan V. 7.1 and Patch 50:

### ■ A New Full-Screen MailMan Message Center

MailMan Patch 50 now provides a simulated full-screen message center. You can choose the message reader best suited to your needs. You can set your default message reader to the improved "Classic" MailMan message reader or either of the two new full-screen message displays:

- **Classic Message Reader**—Displays messages as MailMan did prior to Patch 50 (displayed in a traditional view).
- **Detailed Full Screen Message Reader**—Displays complete details of each message (displayed in a full screen view).
- **Summary Full Screen Message Reader**—Displays summary details of each message (displayed in a full screen view).

Also, when using either the Detailed or Summary Full Screen message readers to view a list of messages in a basket, you can switch between the two full screen readers (and change the amount of detail displayed) by using the new Change Detail action code. The Change Detail ("CD") command is

similar to entering one question mark (for summary information) or two question marks (for detailed information) at the message action prompt when using the Classic message reader.

## ■ New and Improved User Options

Along with some improvements, new options and functionality have been added to those commonly performed MailMan tasks, such as:

- **Reading Mail**—MailMan provides additional options/capabilities as well as the old standbys when reading your mail, including:
  - **New Capability to Specify the List Order of Your Messages**—You can now choose the order in which your messages are displayed (i.e., newest messages first or oldest messages first).
  - **Improved Ability to Page Through Messages**—MailMan allows you to page back and forth (any number of pages) through your list of messages.
  - **Improved Capability to Make Message New or Not New**—MailMan always allowed you to make message appear as "new" again, however, you can now make new messages "not new" (Un New) too.
  - **Improved Message Print Functionality**—When you print a message, you'll be able to print any selection of responses. The new prompt is more powerful than the old one. For example:
    - If you enter 0-100, MailMan prints the original message through response 100.
    - If you print responses "25-", MailMan understands that you want to print all responses from response 25 through the end.
    - You can also print specific responses as well as a range of responses to make one "clean" print with only the pertinent responses (e.g., 1-3,7,9,20-23,54...).
  - **Select Messages for Subsequent Group Actions or Take Action On a Single Message**—You can now select and deselect any combination of messages until you're ready to do something with the selected group of messages or a single message, such as:
    - Delete them
    - Filter them
    - Forward them
    - Later them
    - Print them to the screen or another device
    - Save them to another basket
    - Terminate them



- **Sending Mail**—MailMan provides additional convenience when sending mail, including:
  - **New Capability to Stagger/Schedule Delivery of Messages**—You can now schedule the delivery of a message to *individual* recipients by specifying a separate delivery date/time for each (staggered delivery). For example, you can send a message to yourself and "new" it for yourself for a later date.  
  
Also, you can schedule the delivery of the message to *all* addressees for a later date and time (i.e., deferred send). This creates a task that you can manipulate through TaskMan.
  - **Improved Message Editing Functionality**—You no longer need to separately edit a message in order to make it closed, confidential, priority, request a confirmation receipt, etc. These options can now be done just before you send the message at the "Select Message option: Transmit now //" prompt.
  - **New Delivery Basket Set Option**—Now when you are sending a message, depending on a recipient's delivery basket privileges, you can specify a mail basket (new or existing) to which a message should be delivered.
  - **New Vaporize Functionality**—Now you can set a message to be deleted ("vaporized") from a user's mailbox at a specific date and time when you send a message.
  - **Improved Message Reply Functionality**—"Reply" immediately attaches your reply to the response chain, thus, making it instantly available to anyone currently reading the message, providing a "real-time" conversation between message recipients.  
  
MailMan will also notify you when new responses come in while reading a message. This gives you the opportunity to see the latest responses.  
  
Also, new functionality has been added that enables you to copy any combination of previous responses into your reply. Thus, you can more easily respond to what someone wrote, point by point.
  - **Improved Message Copy Functionality**—When you copy a message, you can copy any combination of responses.
  - **Improved Message Answer Functionality**—Now when you "Answer" a message, the original message is copied *before* you are placed in the editor. "Answer" first copies the original message, adds your Network Signature, and then puts you into the editor. Once you're finished with your answer, it is sent as a separate message to the sender of the original message.
  - **Improved Group Messaging**—If you send your message to a large mail group, you can now have the message delivered at a later date and time so you don't have to wait while MailMan addresses the message to the entire group.

- **Searching For Mail**—Can't find a message, but you know it's in one of your mail baskets somewhere? Now, with MailMan's vastly improved and more powerful Query/Search for Messages option, you can search for messages in any mail basket or a specific basket by specifying any combination of the following:
  - **Date Sent Range**—Search for a message based on approximately when the message was sent.
  - **Message Text**—Search for a message based on specific text within the message.
  - **Sender of the Message**—Search for a message based on the sender of the message.
  - **Subject Contents**—Search for a message looking for any part of the message subject.
  - **Addressee of the Message**—Search for a message based on the addressee of the message.
  - **Responder to the Message**—Search for a message based on a specific responder to the message.

Upon completion of the search, you are presented with a list of all the messages that were found as a result of your message query.

- **Message Filtering**—Message filtering is now available! You'll be able to set up standing instructions to MailMan as to which baskets you'd like certain messages delivered. You can base your choice on any combination of the following:
  - **Message Subject Contents**
  - **Sender of a Message**
  - **Recipient(s) of a Message**

You'll be able to send messages directly to any basket you choose (e.g., the "WASTE" basket) based on partial subject matching, partial sender matching, and/or partial address matching. By partial, we mean that if, for example, just part of the subject matches your subject filter, the filter is used. With that kind of power, you'll be able to "waste" your messages with impunity!

## ■ New and Improved Personal Preferences

New functionality has been added to the MailMan interface that allows you to further customize your message center. It provides you with additional personal preferences giving you more control over the interface:

- **New Mail Basket Naming Capability**—Basket names can now begin with numbers, and when you list them, they'll be in alphabetical order.
- **New Delivery Basket Privileges**—MailMan now allows you to decide if you will allow a sender of a message to direct mail to specific baskets or create new mail baskets in your mailbox.

## ■ Other Improved MailMan Patch 50 Features

The following list briefly describes the new and improved general functionality and characteristics provided with MailMan and Patch 50:

- **Improved Online Help System**—Use "?" and "???" online help liberally to find out what you can do at each prompt or menu option (similar to Graphical User Interface [GUI] context-sensitive help). Also, all MailMan help screens and online help have been updated to assist you with all of the new features and improvements introduced with Patch 50.
- **Combined Options**—The two separate options for becoming a surrogate (i.e., Assume the Identity of SHARED,MAIL and Assume another identity as a surrogate) have now been combined into a single option, Become a Surrogate (SHARED,MAIL or Other).
- **User Interaction Done Through VA FileMan**—User interaction, wherever possible, is now standardized through VA FileMan (e.g., "?" and "???" online help at all prompts).
- **Increased Robustness of the MailMan APIs**—For developers, improvements have been made to *existing* Application Programmer Interfaces (APIs) making them more robust. In addition, *new* APIs are also provided to give application programmers additional hooks into MailMan.



*For VISTA applications using approved MailMan APIs: it is not necessary to make any modifications, because the same APIs are still in use and all changes to those APIs have been made in the background.*



**Those VISTA applications *not* using approved MailMan APIs or having an approved Database Integration Agreement (DBIA) with MailMan, must review their code to determine if modifications are necessary prior to installing Patch 50.**

- **Improved MailMan Management Tools**—For those of you who manage MailMan (e.g., IRM), the MailMan global integrity checker now recognizes and corrects more errors and produces output you can better understand and use (instead of the previous cryptic error messages).

- **Improved Program Code for Ease of Maintenance**—The MailMan routines and program code have been reviewed, modified where necessary, and updated to conform to the latest M Standard resulting in a more robust and efficient set of routines. These modifications help ease the burden of maintenance of the MailMan software. Some of these modifications include:
  - Almost all of the code underlying the user front end has been rewritten:
    - It is now compartmentalized
    - It uses parameter passing
    - It NEWs its variables
    - It has a very small, tightly controlled set of package-wide variables
  - The code to receive messages from remote sites (^XMR\*) has been largely rewritten and streamlined.
  - A majority of the code underlying local message delivery has been rewritten.
- **Seamless Domain Name Change Capability**—Patch 50 now provides for easier Domain Name changes.